

study for the treatment of, say, idiopathic vestibular disease. How can one purport to know which, if any, of the drugs had any effect in positive outcomes or, perhaps, if the combination was a cause of some of the failures that are bound to occur?

What was practised here was not classical homeopathy, but rather an attempt to use a "homeopathic" remedy in an allopathic way. What was studied was not the effectiveness of a homeopathic remedy at all, because it wasn't homeopathic to each individual case.

First, in considering a case for homeopathic treatment, each case is carefully studied to discern what is unique about the way the patient is reacting to its "disease." Therefore, all dogs with CAD would not receive the same remedy. An allopathic diagnosis and prescription would be based on the clinical signs *common* to all cases of CAD, like scratching and licking, for example. The homeopathic prescription would be based on the patient's *unique* presentation of the totality of its disease signs. Second, the potencies of the remedies in the mixture used were exceedingly low and would not be expected to have any deep or long-lasting effect. Third, this was an over-the-counter product, not one that would be carefully selected by a practising homeopath.

We hope that this clarifies for your readers the reasons for the failure of this study to show treatment success with homeopathics. It might be an idea for clinical investigators to speak with a classical homeopath when designing any future studies.

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A poor test of homeopathy

Dear Sir,

It is sad to read the report of the study by Scott et al, purporting to test the effect of homeopathic remedies (Can Vet J 2002;43:601-603). First, are any of the investigators practising veterinary homeopaths certified with the Academy of Veterinary Homeopathy? Second, if these veterinarians had had a real understanding of homeopathic therapy, they would not have used an over-the-counter homeopathic combination product to carry out a scientific test of homeopathy. Homeopathic remedies are used singly and are chosen with care and study, not to treat a given "disease" but rather to address the clinical signs of illness specifically present in the individual animal; that is, one atopic dog is not necessarily treated with the same remedy as another.

This study was truly a poor test of homeopathy and does not help veterinarians to understand in any way the

benefit or effectiveness of this mode of therapy. I am an allopathic veterinarian of almost 30 years of practice who discovered the intriguing field of homeopathic therapy 3 years ago by taking Dr. Richard Pitcairn's courses in veterinary homeopathy. I have treated both chronic and acute cases with homeopathy in my practice.

Unless one honestly studies classical homeopathy, it is impossible to criticize, critique, or scientifically test this discipline. As more veterinarians look at alternative therapies, I feel that veterinary journals should endeavor to publish articles that are truly peer reviewed.

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